

VZCZCXR05764
RR RUEHBZ RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHTO #0507/01 1120807
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 220807Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0238
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0376

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000507

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR OES/PCI, OES/ENV AND AF/S

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SENV SOCI MZ

SUBJECT: MAPUTO UNPREPARED TO DEAL WITH CLIMATE CHANGE
IMPACTS

¶1. (U) This cable represents the first in a series of innovative collaboration in environment/science reporting between Embassies Maputo and Pretoria. Embassy Pretoria ESTH Officer and Maputo Economic/Commercial officer visited environment and science projects in Niassa, Sofala and Cabo Delgado Provinces and met relevant government and private officials in Maputo during a March 8-17, 2009 visit.

¶2. Summary. Pretoria ESTH officer reviewed Maputo Municipal Council (MMC) Head of Social Affairs Dr. Alexandre Manguele's March 2009 presentation on climate change in Maputo. Manguele states that Maputo is "highly vulnerable" to natural disasters, especially hydro-meteorological (flood, droughts and cyclones). Manguela believes that Maputo's strengths in combating potential climate change impacts include a decentralized organizational structure, a transparent government and improved managerial/technical capacities. Maputo lacks the managerial and technical skills to address climate change at the city level. End summary.

BACKGROUND: MAPUTO'S VULNERABILITIES

¶3. Maputo has 1.1 million inhabitants, seventy percent of whom live in informal settlements. Fifty-four percent live below the poverty line. Approximately sixty percent of the city's inhabitants lack sanitation facilities. Only about 25-50 percent (depending on the area) of solid waste is collected. Approximately fifty percent of Maputo's roads are paved. Sea walls hold back the sea and must be continuously maintained or moved due to sea erosion.

¶4. Maputo's coastal zones, transportation systems, wetlands, urban agriculture, residences, and waste/water management systems are all vulnerable to potential impacts of climate change. Cyclones damage dunes and coastal infrastructures, including houses. High storm flows and sea rises cause increased erosion, increased road maintenance costs, and saltwater intrusion into the aquifer. Temperature variations accelerate damage to roads and bridges, increasing maintenance costs. Heavy precipitation causes floods, landslides, washouts, damaging housing and infrastructure. Manguela says Maputo will need new flood and storm water systems and different methods to control erosion to cope with anticipated climate change impacts. Longer dry seasons could mean crop failures, drying of water reservoirs, and loss of habitat.

¶5. Maputo's Avenida Marginal which runs along the coast is gradually disappearing. The sea is causing serious erosion problems including the uprooting of the casuarinas trees planted by the Portuguese to stop erosion. On three islands located a few kilometers from the coast mangroves are disappearing, the water quality is degrading and desertification due to drought is increasing.

¶ 16. Xefina island, which has been home to sixty subsistence fishers, is slowly sinking into the sea. Parts of a colonial airstrip have already disappeared. Maputo Province Governor Rosa de Silva urged residents in February 2009 to help stop erosion by planting trees, the same trees residents have been chopping down for firewood. (Comment: Xefina served as a barrier reef for Maputo, protecting it from the full force of the Indian Ocean. If the island disappears completely, many Maputo neighborhoods will feel the impact of the ocean directly. End Comment.)

MAPUTO'S STRATEGY) IMPROVED URBAN DEVELOPMENT

¶ 17. Manguele states that Maputo is "highly vulnerable" to natural disasters, especially hydro-meteorological (flood, droughts and cyclones). He provides the devastating floods of Feb/March 2000 as an example of this vulnerability. Seven hundred people were killed and Maputo sustained \$600 million worth of damages.

¶ 18. The Maputo Municipal Council (MMC) has developed a climate change two-phase development plan (PROMAPUTO) concentrating on improving municipal financing and integrated urban planning. The first phase (2007-2009) includes rehabilitation of primary infrastructure (drainage systems, roads and coastal protection) and engagement of the private sector on issues such as waste collection.)

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CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

¶ 19. Manguela believes that Maputo's strengths in combating climate change include a decentralized organizational structure, a transparent government and improved managerial/technical capacities. Weaknesses include a lack of managerial and technical capacity to address climate change at the city level. He cautions that budget constraints and limited human resources remain severe gaps.

¶ 110. Manguela believes Maputo must take the following actions to effectively deal with adaptation/mitigation:

- Improve drainage/ storm water systems;
- Restore coastline protection dikes;
- Develop adaptation./mitigation urban plans;
- Improve solid waste management;
- Installation of ecological water treatment plants; and
- Implement Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects.

Manguela notes that the city has strong political will, but needs financial and technical assistance, including a multi-dimensional study of climate change impacts on Maputo.

Comment

¶ 111. Maputo is a city that could be severely impacted by changes in its climate. The city infrastructure is not able to handle any potential adverse impacts. The city has no municipal climate change unit and no municipal employees with technical or managerial skills to staff such a unit. There is political will, but additional programs sponsored by international donors will be essential in helping Maputo meet potential climate challenges. End comment.

Chapman